Spring 2-1-2019

HSTA 320.01: Birth of Modern US

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HSTA 320: Birth of Modern America, 1877-1919
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Office Hours: T: 9-10, Th: 1-2

Course Description and Learning Objectives

The history of the United States from 1877 to 1919 is largely the story of Americans responding to profound social, cultural, and economic changes that seemed beyond their ability to control. The institutions, ideologies, and structures that ordered the nation’s locally oriented, mostly agrarian society during the nineteenth century were unable to cope with the advent of large-scale industrialization, mass immigration and migration, rapidly expanding cities, mass communication, and the emergence of a nationwide popular culture. Americans struggled, sometimes violently, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to create new institutions, ideologies, and structures that would bring order to their changing world. The order they created is, in modified form, still with us today. In this class, we will explore the myriad changes that transformed the United States during this period and study the social, political, economic, and cultural struggles that shaped the emergence of Modern America. We will pay particular attention to the public debates about key issues of the period. The primary learning objectives for this course are:

1. Enable students to develop a sophisticated understanding of U.S. history from 1877 to 1919
2. Immerse students in public debates about crucial issues in U.S. history from 1877 to 1919
3. Improve students’ ability to communicate ideas, both verbally and in writing
4. Develop students’ ability read critically, think analytically, and synthesize information into a coherent understanding.
5. Develop students’ ability to conduct historical research and analyze historical sources

Readings

The following books are required for the course. Copies are available in the bookstore.

Rebecca Edwards, New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age, 1865-1905
John Milton Cooper, Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900-1920

In addition, you will be reading articles and book excerpts that are available as pdf files on the course Moodle page. Please refer to the “Course Schedule” for a full listing of these readings.

The reading load for this course is not excessive. I expect you to complete all the assigned reading in preparation for each class and be prepared to discuss the readings. The documents will require careful attention and thoughtful engagement. You will need to study them—not just skim them. By carefully studying the documents in combination with one another, you will not just learn their content but also develop the vital intellectual skills of analysis and synthesis.

Assignments and Grading
Exam #1 will cover course content from the Unit 1 (the Gilded Age), and Exam #2 will cover course content from Unit 2 (the Progressive Era). These in-class exams will consist of a variety of assessment tools, including essay questions and short-answer questions. I intend the exams to challenge you and truly test your knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the course. I encourage you to study diligently for the exams—both to reinforce and enhance what you have learned and so you can earn a good grade.

The research paper is six-to-seven pages long and will be based on newspaper and periodical sources available online through keyword searchable databases on the Mansfield Library webpage. No additional secondary source research will be required for this assignment.

Quizzes will occur six times during the semester. You will respond to a question about the reading(s) assigned for that class session. To do well on the quizzes, you will need to reference specific information from reading(s) to support your answer. The quizzes serve two functions. They hold you accountable for the assigned reading(s) and activate your thinking in preparation for the class discussion. Quizzes may not be made up. I will throw out your lowest quiz score.

Every student must participate in class discussions. I will provide a set of reading questions for most class sessions that will focus your attention on the critical topics and themes covered in the readings and serve as the basis for our discussions. Use these questions to prepare yourself to participate in the discussions.

*Attendance is required. If you have more than three unexcused absences during the semester, you will receive an F for class participation. Your final grade is based on the sum total of your scores for the term. Final grades are figured at 90=A, 80=B, 70=C, 60=D. Below 60 is an F. The dividing line for minuses is _3; the dividing line for pluses is _7.

**Academic Honesty**

Neither plagiarism nor any form of cheating will be tolerated. The work you submit in this course must be your own. When you draw from the words and thoughts of others, acknowledge it in footnotes. Plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Drop Deadlines**

The last day to drop a class by Cyberbear is January 31. The last day to drop with instructor and advisor signature is March 15. A WP or WF will appear on your transcript for courses dropped after this date. April 26 is the last day to drop this class.
# Course Schedule

## Unit One: The Gilded Age

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thu, Jan. 10</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td>Joseph T. Finnerty, “Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Relations between Capital and Labor,” (1883).</td>
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<td>Andrew Carnegie, “Popular Illusions about Trusts,” (1900), excerpt.</td>
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<td>Fitz John Porter, “How to Quell Mobs,” <em>North American Review</em> 141 (October 1885), 351-60.</td>
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<td>George Frederick Parsons, “The Labor Question,” (1886).</td>
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<td>Thu, Jan. 31</td>
<td>Gilded Age Governance</td>
<td>Read: Grover Cleveland, “Veto of House Bill 10203” (1887).</td>
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<td>Omaha Platform of the People’s Party (1892).</td>
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<td><em>In Re Debs</em>, 158 U.S. 564 (1895)</td>
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<td>Herbert Spencer, “From Freedom to Bondage,” (1891), excerpt.</td>
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Tue, Feb. 5: **Race and Power in the New South**

*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537 (1896).

Thu, Feb. 7: **Voices from Indian Country**

Chief Charlot, “The Indian and Taxation,” (1876).
“Eyewitness Accounts of the Wounded Knee Incident,” 433-49.

Tue, Feb. 12: **American Imperialism**

Read: Albert Beveridge, “A Defense of Imperialism,” (1900).
Jane Addams, “Democracy or Militarism,” (1899).
Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” (1901).

Thu, Feb. 14: No Class—Study for Exam #1

Tue, Feb. 19: Exam #1

Unit Two: The Progressive Era

Thu, Feb. 21: **Progressive Era Overview I**
Read: Cooper, *Pivotal Decades*, xiii-xvii, 1-89.

Tue, Feb. 26: **Progressive Era Overview II**

Thu, Feb. 28: **Progressive Era Overview III**
Tue, Mar. 5:  **Progressive Era Overview IV**
Read: Copper, *Pivotal Decades*, 268-376.

Thu, Mar. 7:  **Immigration and Ethnicity**

Tue, Mar. 12:  **Progressive Reform**
*Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U.S. 412 (1908)
Reforms Passed in Wisconsin, 1909-1911

Thu, Mar. 14:  **The Rights of Women**
Margaret Sanger, *The Case for Birth Control* (1917), excerpt.
Anti-Suffrage Cartoons

Tue, Mar. 19:  **Consumerism and Popular Culture**

Thu, March 21:  Research Paper Preparation

Tue, March 26:  No class—Spring Break

Thu, March 28:  No class—Spring Break
Tue, Apr. 2:  **Hetch Hetchy and the Conservation Debate**

“Hetch Hetchy Debate before Congress,” (1913).

Thu, Apr. 4:  **Debating U.S. Involvement in World War I**

George W. Norris, “Speech Against American entry into World War I,” (1917).
Eugene V. Debs, Anti-War Speech in Canton, Ohio, (1918).

Tue, Apr. 9:  No Class—Prepare for Exam #2

Thu, Apr. 11:  Exam #2

Tue, Apr. 16:  Individual Meetings to Discuss Research Papers

Thu, Apr. 18:  No class—Work on Research Paper

Tue, April 23:  No class—Work on Research Paper

Thu, April 25:  Hand in Research Paper and Complete Course Evaluation